SPENSER'S "TWELVE AEGLOGVES PROPORTIONABLE TO THE TWELVE MONETHES"

A Portion Of

COLIN CLOUT AND HOBBINOLL: A RECONSIDERATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF EDMUND SPENSER AND GABRIEL HARVEY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1933

BY

MARY PARMENTER

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SYNOPSIS

The first biographers of Spenser to draw extensive inferences from his " correspondence " with Gabriel Harvey were Upton (1758), and Todd (1805). In the 19th century, Craik (1845), and Child (1855), more critically, and Collier (1862), and Grosart (1882-84), more rashly, reconstructed and interpreted the 1578-80 period of Spenser's life, with his probable relationships with Sidney, Leicester and others, from this " correspondence " printed in 1580 and from the *Shepheardes Calender*. Since then, this now traditional material has been supplemented by additions from Harvey's *Letter-Book* (published 1884), and some of his marginalia. Harvey has now assumed considerable importance as a possible influence upon Spenser's earlier thought, and has become, especially through biographical and bibliographical study of him by R. B. McKerrow (1910), and G. C. Moore Smith (1913), an interesting English " Renaissance " figure of the 16th century.

But analysis of both the *Letter-Book* and printed " correspondence " reveals contradictions or inconsistencies of dating and of subject matter which make it impossible to accept his letters to " Immerito " as samples from an actual correspondence with Spenser. Rather, the socalled letters to Spenser in the central portion of his notebook are literary experiments revealing his desire to satarize the enemies of " English " poetry, but of slight biographical connection with Spenser; and the " correspondence " with " Immerito " is a satirical pamphlet in which he borrowed Spenser's pseudonym for two short letters which serve to introduce his own replies.

Our over-emphasis upon Spenser's Puritanism, and upon personal identifications, in the *Shepheardes Calender*, has led us to neglect the obvious: (1) His twelve eclogues in many respects follow the traditional moral pattern of the Christian year; and (2) his point of view, like Sidney's in his letter to the Queen, is nationalistically anti-Catholic in the crisis of 1579 when Elizabeth seemed about to marry the Duke of Alençon. Thus, for instance, Spenser's " November " elegy reflects the teachings of death and immortality appropriate for

the season of All Saints and All Souls; and, at the same time, in the death of Dido he laments allegorically the " death " of Queen Elizabeth as the champion of Protestantism against the Catholic powers, and as the pastoral mistress of the shepherd " Lobbin," the Earl of Leicester. While Harvey is " Hobbinoll " and Spenser is " Colin Clout," we have followed too long E. K.'s false lead, necessary in 1579-80, away from the " dangerous " satire toward the identifications of private friends.

While undoubtedly there was some degree of friendship between Harvey and Spenser, as evidenced by Harvey's marginalia and by the fact that Harvey's name appears as sponsor for the otherwise anonymous *Shepheardes Calender*, this legend of friendship must not be confused with that of " Hobbinoll " and " Colin Clout " or built uncritically out of Harvey's " correspondence " with " Immerito." It is more important to investigate, if possible, what these imaginary names connoted; or to note that while Harvey's epistolary satires resulted from his desire to ridicule personal enemies, he cast it, under the influence of the times, into anti-Italianate, anti-French, or ironically pro-" Inglish " terms, and that these were appro priate for imaginary correspondence with " Immerito."

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SPENSER *TWELVE AEGLOGVES PROPORTIONABLE TO THE TWELVE MONETHES*

By Mary Parmenter

E. K. in his introduction to Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* states that the new anonymous poet "compiled these xij. Aeglogues which for that they be proportioned to the state of the xij. monethes, he termeth the *Shepheards Calendar,* applying an olde name to a new worke." We have, apparently, never appreciated the perfectly simple and obvious way in which this is true, seeing in Spenser's parallel of Colin Clout's youth in "Januarie," middle age in "June," and old age in "December," merely an imitation of Marot, and noting no way, beyond the shepherds' allusions to the weather, or the seasons, in which the "aeglogues," are "proportionable" to the twelve months. Many readers have probably felt, as Renwick seems to, that while Spenser "invented a new gambit in linking his eclogues together in a Calendar," [1] some of the metrical experiments in his miscellany would have fitted about as well into one month as another; or that E. K.'s emphasis upon the old *Kalendar and Compost of Shepherds* is not important.

If, however, we turn to this old *Kalendar,*[2] we find that the significance of the months is expressed in two places: first in the Prologue of the "Master Shepherd" upon the progress of man's life, where each of four ages is likened to a season, and then each of twelve ages represented by one of the months; and second in the calendar proper, where verses in Latin and English, as well as wood-cuts of the appropriate occupations and of the signs of the zodiac serve to mingle the astronomical, the bucolic, and the moral aspects—the moral coinciding with

[1] *The Shepherd's Calendar,* edited by R. L. Renwick, London, 1930, p. 42. In "The Composition of the 'Shepheardes Calender,'" *PMLA* 50 (1935). 423-434, Roland Bassett Botting reviews the conjectures of several critics. He concludes that the eclogues were written at various times, and hurriedly but imperfectly fitted into the later calendar scheme, many of them bearing little or no relation to the month assigned.

[2] The most accessible edition is *The Kalendar & Compost of Shepherds . . . newly edited . . .* by G. C. Heseltine, London, 1931. See pp. 3-5, and 161-163.

the teaching for the special season of the Christian Year. In this paper, I wish to show that Spenser's twelve eclogues are likewise, in one way or another, truly " proportioned to the state of the xij. monethes," as stated on the title page and in the introduction, while at the same time the life of Colin Clout is " proportioned " to the scheme of the four seasons.

E. K., in his argument before Spenser's " December," is not referring exclusively to Marot but to an old conception well known to both poets and to their readers, when he outlines Colin's spring of youth, summer of manhood, harvest of riper years (unripe and unseasonable), and winter of latter age. In the old *Kalendar* the " Master Shepherd " in his Prologue assigns eighteen years of man's life to each of the four ages, and equates them with the seasons, spring beginning with February, summer with May, and so on; again in a later section of the book (the chapter dealing with remedies for sicknesses by the principles of the natural changes in time) man's four seasons are given as youth, strength, age, and decrepitude—the apportionment of years being different here as well as the arrangement of the months, and the parallel with the four quarters of the year being a medical one based on the four humours.[3] But aside from the old *Kalendar*, which is merely the most direct and obvious source, and the one cited by E. K., Spenser and his readers would have found the parallel an ancient and common one: Caxton's *Golden Legend* gives a form of it, in explaining by eight reasons the Ember Days, or " fasting of the Quatretemps." " The seventh reason is because that March is reported to infancy, summer to youth, September to steadfast age and virtuous, and winter to ancienty or old age." [4]

The prologue of the " Master Shepherd " in the old manual outlines also the way " Man changeth twelve times even as the twelve months do ":

> Take the first six year for January, the which is of no virtue nor strength. In that season no thing on the earth groweth. So man after he is born till he be six year of age is without wit, strength, or cunning, and may do no thing that profiteth.
>
> Then cometh February and then the days beginneth to wax in

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

[4] *The Golden Legend, or Lives of the Saints, as Englished by William Caxton*, edited by F. S. Ellis, London, 1931, 1. 63-66.

length and the Sun more hotter, then the fields beginneth to wax green. So the other six year till he come to twelve, the child beginneth to grow bigger, and serve and learn as is taught him.

So he progresses through youth and middle age, pastimes and labors, until the end:

Then cometh November, that the days be very short, and the Sun in manner giveth little heat and the trees loseth their leaves. The fields that were green look hoar and grey. Then all manner of herbs be hid in the ground and then appeareth no flowers. And then winter is come that the man hath understanding of age, and hath lost his kindly heat and strength; his teeth begin to rot and also they chatter. And then hath he no more hope of long life, but desireth to the life everlasting: and these six for this month maketh him sixty-six years.

December brings him to his full term of seventy-two years, his hair white, his body crooked and feeble.

If now we turn to the actual calendar, or rather almanac, section of the *Kalendar*, we find for each month both a woodcut picturing the appropriate occupation, and, on the opposite page, along with the list of the days of the month (each a saint's day), Latin verses for the regiment of health, and English ones in which the month "speaks." In most cases these echo the words of the prologue of the "Master Shepherd," but often they give also the moral teaching of the feasts of the Church occurring in that month:

I am *February* the most hardy,
In my season the pure mother virginal
Offered her Son in the temple, truly
Making to God a present special
Of Jesus Christ the King of Kings all
Between the arms of the bishop Simeon,
To whom pray we to have remission.

Or there may be a "moral" based on "natural" significance, as well as the religious:

Among the others *October* I hight,
Friend unto vintners naturally,
And in my time Bacchus is ready dight
All manner wine to press and clarify
Of which is sacred, as we see daily,
The blessed body of Christ in flesh and blood,
Which is our hope, refection, and food.

I *November* will not abide behind
To show my kindly worthiness and ure,
For in my time the blasts of the wind
Abateth leaves and sheddeth their verdure,
Wherefore every prudent creature
Ought for to live right as they would die,
For all things taketh end naturally.

While the whole endlessly complex theme of the " state of the twelve months " would lead into the study of Books of Hours, other books of devotion, and many varieties of almanacs with their verses and pictures of the occupations, we may turn from the old *Kalendar of Shepherds* to look at a primer printed in 1538 [5]—a forerunner of the English Book of Common Prayer.

Along with matins, evensong, psalms, meditations, epistles and gospels for every Sunday and holy day in the year, translated out of Latin into English and purged of some " superstitions," there is also a " kalendar "—not like the modern " tables for finding holy days," and no mere lectionary, but an almanac complete with seven planets, twelve signs of the zodiac, anatomical man, and verses and woodcuts for each month illustrative of the progress of man's life, after the plan of the " Master Shepherd." Thus:

The fyrst .vi. yeres of mannes byrth and aege
May well be compared to Janyvere.
For in this month is no strength nor courage.
More than in a chylde of the aege of .vi. yere.

For February the scene is a schoolroom, the boys with books, the master with the rod, while the sign Pisces hangs like a picture upon the wall:

The other .vi. yeres is lyke February.
In the ende ther of begynneth the sprynge.
That Tyme chyldren is moost apt and redy
To receyve chastysement/ nurture/ and lernynge.

March shows three huntsmen with bows and arrows and dogs, pursuing hare, deer and birds:

[5] This primer (British Museum c. 52. f. 16) is not unique in having the almanac and pictures. Not all primers have the verses. Some almanacs, for instance Jasper Laet's for 1543, contain the epistles and gospels for Sundays and holy days.

Marche betokeneth the .vi. yeres folowynge
Arayeng the erth wt pleasaunt verdure.
That season youth careth for nothynge.
And without thought dooth his sporte & pleasure.

September shows a man in rags, with staff in hand and sack on shoulder, turning away from a door where a lean dog barks beside an empty barrel. Above a bare tree hangs the sign of the Balances, Libra. Across the inhospitable door is written " September," while the verse reads:

Lete no man thynke for to gather plenty
Yf at .liiij. yere he have none.
Nomore than yf his barne were empty
In Septembre/ whan all the corne is gone.

October, however, shows a feast at which a man in a furred gown holds a wine cup, while his wife and children sit at table, sixty years being the age when man should live quietly after his travail. In November, the sick man sits in a chair, the doctor examining a urinal; in December, wife, priest and friends stand beside his deathbed.

The word " calendar " connoted far more, to the 16th century mind, than a convenient table for estimating time. Because of the very importance of the ancient and familiar Church Year, the Puritan innovators felt that no Reform was complete until it had destroyed much of this rich pageant of life. The general trend of the bishops and others, who had made the Church Calendar during the time of Edward VI and of Elizabeth, was to drop from the Book of Common Prayer all saints' days or holy days that had no Scriptural justification, but to preserve the main structure of the ancient plan. Yet the extreme reformers of the 1570's objected bitterly to this very feature—the Prayer Book was a filthy idol, superstitiously observing new moons, times, and seasons, in its retention of the Papistical arrangement of collects, epistles, and gospels for the Sundays and holy days throughout the year.[6] Calendar, ritual, vestments, were all bound up in the idea of Establishment and Episcopacy—the defense of all these against Cartwright and others in the 1570's was to culminate a few years later in Hook-

[6] Procter and Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, London, 1891, and Charles Wheatley, *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer* (first edition, 1722), remain standard references.

er's *Ecclesiastical Polity,* Anglican as well as Puritan setting forth the duty of ministers and pastors to " feed the sheep," but differing as to how that might best be done.

A " calendar " had also various secular connotations which we perhaps forget: including, or being used as the equivalent for " almanac," it carried also the idea of prophecy or prognostication, vaguely political. An almanac was ever the most " popular " of " learned " works, bringing home to the common man's business and bosom, thoughts of his starry destiny. The husbandman's fortunes depended on the weather of the year, man's fate on the stars' revolution—all were in some wise set forth in almanac or calendar by learned clerks. Times and seasons could be observed, but were not to be tampered with.

Proposals for the reform of the secular calendar, set forth in 1577 to the universities and governments of Christendom, by Pope Gregory, were objected to by most English Protestants whether Puritan or not, as in some sense an acknowledgment of Roman jurisdiction over England. During the latter 1570's, when the question of dropping out ten days from October, and of correcting the calendar so as to avoid errors in future, was being discussed in the universities, the Council chamber, and the streets, the word " calendar " took on an additional and " ominous " timeliness. At some time, just before or after 1580, the famous mathematician, Dr. John Dee, drew up for Lord Burghley an alternative " Protestant " plan, dropping eleven days instead of ten. But when, in 1582, the Catholic portion of Europe adopted the Gregorian calendar, England, of course, continued with the Old Style.[7] In the 16th century learned men discussed the problems of chronology mathematically, his-

[7] Alexander Philip, *The Calendar: Its History, Structure and Improvement,* Cambridge, 1921, pp. 20-70. Dr. Dee's plan was submitted to a committee of divines—Grindal, Aylmer, Piers and Young—who rejected it as Papist. See the article on Dee in the *DNB,* and *Letters on Scientific Subjects,* ed. J. O. Halliwell, Historical Society of Science, London, 1841, p. 30. Evidence of popular feeling against the proposed change, which would also involve beginning the year with January 1, is furnished by an entry in the Stationers' Register, December 16, 1578: " A newe yeres gift dedicated to the Popes holynes and all catholickes addycted to the sea of Rome. preferred the first of January in the yere of our lord after the course and computacion of the Romanistes 1579 by B. G. citizen of London. . . ." Of course January 1 was New Year's day, when gifts were exchanged; but the date was usually changed on March 25. Some scholars or others affected by continental usage changed the year at January 1.

torically, philosophically, politically, and poetically, making comparisons of Greek, Roman, Hebrew and Egyptian years and months.[8] E. K.'s introductory discussion set before Spenser's *Calender* is perfectly in order, being needful and appropriate for a poetic calendar—and for one printed in 1579, especially timely.

Pastoral poetry was, above all other genres, suitable to be set in a calendar framework; it could, at least, include far more of the ideas of the "life of man" than the more purely astrological or, in a sense, metaphysical, genre represented by Palingenius' *Zodiac of Life*. But "astronomical poetry" covered a wide and rather vague field, as we know from the oft-quoted marginalia of Gabriel Harvey upon his copy of Dionysius Periegetes, or *Surveye of the World . . . englished by T. Twine (1572)*,[9] in which Harvey demands that poets be "curious vniversal schollars," and mentions Spenser's admiration of Du Bartas. Harvey's other notes on the margins of this book are voluminous and illuminating; they range from a list of Chaucer's descriptions of the time of year, through comments on the counterfeit alchemist in the "tale of the Chanons Yeman," other astrological matters, and the delight Mr. Digges, the mathematician, takes in repeating by heart the whole "Aquarius of Palingenius," to lists of poets who have written in this profound "kind." He groups together Ovid, Seneca, Lucan, Manilius; Pontanus, Fracastorio, Palingenius, Mizaldus, Buchanan; Petrarch, Aretino, Ariosto, Tasso; and gives still others who have been aware of the significance of the great rhythms of the universe:

> Sum not vnlike astrological descriptions in the notablest French Poets: cheifly in liuelie Marot, florishing Ronsard, admirable Bartas. . . .

[8] Two random examples of such works may be mentioned: *De Anno et mensibus commentarius . . . quo quicquid peculiatur apud Graecos, Hebraeos, Romanos, caeterasque exteras nationes . . .* Basileae, 1556, by Hadrianus Junius, and one (Bodl. Linc. 8° C. 250), which attempts a comparison of the Latin, Greek and Hebrew years . . . "ut Ecclesiarum toto orbe et quovis tempore, concordiam contra nostros Novatores, in divorum festis recolendis . . . qui per varias mundi partes celebrantur catalogum in manibus habere." The great work of J. J. Scaliger, *De Emendatione Temporum*, 1583, and the later controversies over the Gregorian calendar, belong in a different category.

[9] *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia*, ed. G. C. Moore Smith, Shakespeare Head Press, 1913, pp. 159-164.

Spenser, too, has some knowledge of spheres and astrolabe—" non plane ignarum." The further notes show us another interesting association of ideas in the mind of this discursive Cambridge scholar: after some ridicule of " owr vulgar Astrologers," or " wissards," (" Erra Pater, their Hornebooke. The Shepherds Kalendar, their primer. The Compost of Ptolemeus, their Bible. Arcandam, their newe Testament. The rest, with Albertus secrets, & Aristotles problems Inglished, their great Doctours, & wonderfull Secreta secretorum,") Harvey adds praise of what must be Walter Haddon's Latin version of the Book of Common Prayer (1560), remarking of its appendix entitled " De anno et partibus ejus ":

> Ecce elegans, atque praegnans tractatus in authentico Libro Precum publicarum in Ecclesia nostra Anglicana. Nullum fere opusculum dilucidius, aut compendiosius, quam illa Clericorum Clauis Computus Ecclesiastici. Cuius ignarus, plane asinus ad lyram Ecclesiasticam. Certum mea, tuaque refert, illum ediscere disertum, praegnantemque tractatum De Anno, et partibus eius.

Thus for Harvey, and no doubt for other widely read Elizabethans who made no notes, the year and its parts formed a fundamental framework of thought, at once religious, scientific and poetic.

Spenser might have given us a series of Ovidian " Fasti " setting forth the festivals of Britain; or a cycle of ecclesiastical sonnets in which, as in Wordsworth's,

> The way before us lies
> Distinct with signs, through which in set career,
> As through a zodiac, moves the ritual year.

Or he might have expressed his fears for the state of Britain in a calendar of prognostication based on the prophecy of Merlin;[10] or have made an elaborate set of twelve zodiacal em-

[10] Prophecies, or prognostications, forbidden by statute, could be made with or without almanacs. John Harvey's *Discoursive Probleme concerning Prophecies*, of 1588, designed ostensibly to allay the fears long felt in expectation of that omnious year, in its attacks upon, or allusions to, many such prophecies then extant shows us indirectly that prognostications by " shepherds " and " husbandmen " had political and satiric intent:

" . . . Neither shall I therefore neede to ransacke *Pierce Plowmans* satchel; nor to descant upon fortunes, newly collected out of the old Shepheards *Kalendar*: nor

blems, on the order of his various " Visions." But choosing to give us a " new " *Kalendar of Shepherds*, he placed within the old framework of " the year and its parts," a series of pastoral eclogues which in divers ways both imitate and add to the conventions of that complex *genre*. In this tradition, which is at once and inextricably both lewd and learned, courtly and clownish, satiric and idealistic, he imitates both the homely " Inglish " poetry of Chaucer and Piers Plowman and the elegant rusticity of the French pastoral. The idea of the Calendar is wide enough to include " plaintive " eclogues which trace the seasons of Colin's life, " recreative " ones which reflect both popular and classical " pagan " traditions, and " moral " or " satiric " ones which are most Christian. This Christianity is like Grindal's, militantly Protestant as opposed to Papal domination, but also like Hooker's, grounded upon the " natural law " of the Church of England.

1.

" Januarye." Here Colin, in his first soliloquy, presents himself as the despairing young lover, pale and wan as the season. Although not a child of six years, he has " no virtue nor strength," and he sees as a paradox the parallel of winter with youth rather than with age. While it may be possible to see in his prayer to God Pan:

> . . . thou shepheards God, that once didst loue,
> Pitie the paines, that thou thy selfe didst proue.

to tell you of a day when a *Bush in Essex* shall be worth a *Castell in Kent* . . . nor in regard to fresh occurrents, to renew the like old soothsaying:

> *France*, and *Flanders* shall play at the base:
> And *Spayne* shall make enter in that space:

nor otherwise to fabel of the lion of *Flanders*: or the red lion of *Scotland*: or the lillie of *France*: or the black raven of *Wales*: or the widow of *Calaber* or the rose female in the lande of the *Moone*: or I know not what *greene Christmas*, and *red Harvest*, . . . *country hobs and lobs: clowted shoon*, and *midsommer moone*; or such like homely, and clownish stuffe . . . nor to tosse and turne our *Brittish, English, Irish and Welsh* Chronicles as namely the whole fourth Booke of *Galfridus Monemutensis* . . . *De Prophetiis Merlini*. . . ."

John Harvey concludes that the omens, if anything, are favorable for this dreaded year:

" Rejoice then, O ye *Coridons*: Rest you merrie, O ye *Colin Clowtes*: Clap your hands, O ye *Lobbilins*, for lo a most plentiful and happy yeere awaiteth you: seeing this last *Christmas* day falleth while the moone increaseth. . . ."

a " prophane " parallel to the " sacred " teaching of the Circumcision (January 1)—Christ's voluntary submission to the pains of mortality—the story of Colin Clout's luckless love, presented in the " plaintive " and " recreative " eclogues, has little or no connection with the moral teachings for the months.

2.

" Februarie." While second in his *Calender*, this month is twelfth in the pageant of the year in Spenser's cantos of *Mutabilitie*. Cold, aged, impotent, February there is drawn in his wagon by the " two fishes,"

> . . . yet had he by his side
> His plough and harness fit to till the ground,
> And tooles to prune the trees, before the pride
> Of hasting Prime did make them burgein round . . .[11]

Everywhere February has this dual and contradictory significance: the Old Year struggles with the New, and for a time Winter withstands Spring. Round Candlemas, (February 2), centered popular customs which resembled or repeated those of the New Year season: sunshine on that day (which we call Groundhog Day) meant another forty days of winter; the boisterous farewells of the midwinter festival season, though said at Twelfth Night, were in some ways repeated at Candlemas, and again on Shrove Tuesday.[12]

February in the old *Kalendar of Shepherds* is the first month of spring, or youth, but the second of the twelve ages of man, when the child must learn obedience; the month " speaks " of the presentation of the infant Christ in the temple, into the arms of old " bishop Simeon." While the feast of Candlemas, or of the Presentation of Christ, or of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, had been for the Roman Catholic mainly a Feast of Lights, the sixteenth century Protestant sought to emphasize its " true meaning " not as a lustration like the ancient Roman " Februa," but as the fulfillment of the Old Law in the New Light of the World.[13] For all Christians alike, the em-

[11] *Faerie Queene* 7. 7. 43.

[12] E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, Oxford, 1903, 1. 249.

[13] As, for instance, in Thomas Becon's *Reliques of Rome* . . . 1563, fol. 165. In the 17th century, upon the Restoration of the calendar of the Church, Dr. Edward Sparke, chaplain to Charles II, presented his *Primitive Devotions in the Feasts*

phasis in both January and February was, and is, upon the childhood and youth of Christ, the sacred teaching like the secular customs emphasizing the yielding of Old to New. Or perhaps it would be better to say that the secular customs showed more conflict than yielding; the midwinter power of the Boy Bishop was limited, and now began subjection to elders and betters for apprentice, ploughboy, shepherd lad, and schoolboy.[14] In the primer, February is the month of the schoolroom. Whether master or pupil prevailed in this perennial struggle of Youth and Age was as doubtful as the weather on Candlemas. The ancient custom of the " salt ceremony," when the Eton scholars marched out " ad montem," in Elizabethan times took place near the beginning of Hilary term. There, and in other schools, both the customs of " barring out " and of the schoolmaster's " blaize " came in this month of schoolboy sports, of cockfighting, " shying " at cocks and at Jack-a-lent, and of pancake holidays at Shrove Tuesday.[15] There is no uniformity of practice; but there is endless evidence of the general theme of the assertion of Youth's will against Age in the Winter-Spring season. Incidentally, it is in cold February that Valentines are chosen.

Whether any direct sources for Spenser's " Februarie " will ever be discovered, or any one interpretation of the fable of the Oak and the Briar will be universally accepted, remains to be seen. Here I wish merely to point out that not only the tale of the ancient Oak ruined by the harmful hatchet of the husbandman who heeded the petition of the bragging, upstart Briar, but also the introductory flyting between the ninety-year-old Thenot and scornful young Cuddie, are placed in February because that is the proper month for the contest between Age and Youth, Winter and Spring, Old and New—as well as for the

and Fasts of the Church of England, 1663. For the Purification, he urges parents to present their children to God. For St. James' in July he attacks the Pride, Envy, and Ambition which have been the ruin of three great nations. For St. Matthew's in September he shows the dangers of the service of Mammon.

[14] Plough Monday, Shrove Tuesday and Mid-Lent customs are well known; see *Brand's Popular Antiquities*, ed. Ellis, London, 1853, passim; or *The Book of Days*, ed. R. Chambers; or Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Part 6 (*The Scapegoat*), by index, for customs of Twelfth Night, Saturnalia, and Lent.

[15] See the *Dictionary of Faiths and Folklore*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, London, 1905, under " Eton School," " Bromfield School," " Candlemas Bleeze," and names of holidays.

cutting of trees. The speakers are presented not only ironically but " merrily," as if in a sort of well known debate, play, mumming, or game, part of the joke being that in this month traditionally assigned to the obedient learning of children, though in religion to the " Nunc dimittis " of Simeon, old Thenot is flouted by the disdainful younker. The struggle between Winter and Spring, temporarily won by Winter if the sun shines on Candlemas, is carried on here between Thenot and Cuddie:

Cuddie: No marueile *Thenot*, if thou can beare
Cherefully the Winters wrathfull cheare:
For Age and Winter accord full nie,
This chill, that cold, this crooked, that wrye. . . .

Thenot: . . . when the shining sunne laugheth once,
You deemen, the Spring is come attonce.
Tho gynne you, fond flyes, the cold to scorne,
And crowing in pypes made of greene corne,
You thinkèn to be Lords of the yeare.
But eft, when ye count you freed from feare,
Comes the breme winter. . . .[16]

3.

" Marche." Here in this " recreative " idyll, imitative of Theocritus or Bion, we need look for no moral teaching, and no close parallel with the true teaching of Lady Day, or the Annunciation (March 25) when the Angel Gabriel brings to Mary the tidings of the Incarnation by the Holy Spirit. It is, of course, possible to see an impiously " prophane " parallel between the winged Cupid with whom the young archer Thomalin had the encounter and the winged angel, or even with the Holy Spirit of Divine Love, to earth come down, in the form of the winged dove; in some Renaissance art they are not unlike. It is more probable to see in the allusions, in the gloss, to Flora the harlot of Rome, and Maia the mother of Mercury, for whom the month May was named, as E. K. cites (wrongly) from Macrobius, oblique and slurring references to the festivals of the Virgin Mary. More important is simply the placing of this little idyll of youth in this month of March, when, according to the old primer, young archers go ahunting for birds, and " Youth careth for nothynge." Or we may like to recall the

[16] " Februarie," lines 25-43.

practice of shooting with bow and arrows at the Rood Eye, in the city of Chester, on Easter Monday, the prize being a silver arrow donated by the new-married bridegrooms of the town.[17]

4.

" Aprill." Spenser here again makes a " recreative " eclogue, suitable to the sweet season and without moral teaching. Hobbinol blames Colin Clout for his vain love for Rosalind but sings to Thenot the " laye "

> Of fayre *Elisa*, Queene of Shepheardes all:
> Which once he made, as by a spring he laye,
> And tuned it vnto the Waters fall.

In it Colin calls upon the nymphs, graces, muses, to come out upon the green to do honor to this pastoral goddess, divine daughter of God Pan and the nymph Syrinx. Last he calls for the rural " shepheardes daughters," to come with all fair flowers; forerunners of Touchstone's Audrey,

> See, that your rudenesse doe not you disgrace:
> Binde your fillets faste,
> And gird in your waste,
> For more finesse, with a tawdrie lace.

John Aubrey noted that the shepherds round about Wilton actually lived the life of the Golden Age, and that Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* reflected fact as well as fancy in its eclogues interspersed between its " acts." [18] It would be pleasant to imagine that Spenser, too, was realistically basing his pastoral upon some actual springtime progress of the Queen; or, like Aubrey, to derive British pastoral customs in general from ancient Roman ones, as described by Ovid in his *Fasti*; or to conclude that Spenser, knowing from the *Fasti* Ovid's account of the great and ancient shepherd's festival of the Parilia, (April 21), the " birthday of Rome," and of Numa Pompilius, placed in this month Colin's pastoral in praise of the divine descent of Elisa, the shepherd-goddess; or, with Frazer's *Golden Bough* to equate the pastoral Parilia with St. George's day (April 23).[19] It is not clear, however, that Spenser does any of these

[17] Chambers, *Book of Days* 1. 429.

[18] John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark, Oxford, 1899, 2. 247.

[19] See the *Golden Bough*, Part 1 (*The Magic Art*), 2. 324-348, on St. George's Day and the Parilia.

things exactly, though he makes interesting parallels between British and classic " mythology."

Perhaps it is only a coincidence that E. K.'s grief at Colin's lapses, Colin's mind being " alienate and withdrawn " from all " laudable exercises," echoes the " Master Shepherd's " warning to beware in April lest " the storms of vices beat not down the flowers of good manners that should bring man to honor," [20] as well as the Church's teaching for St. Mark's day (April 25) against being carried away with every blast of vain doctrine. But April is, always, the month of uncertainty—of fair flowers, crystal drops, and of storms which destroy their early promise.

5.

" Maye." This, as E. K. tells us, is a " Moral " eclogue, mixed with some " satirical bitterness," and treating of " coloured deceipt." It is the first of the three ecclesiastical satires, and is placed in the month in which, in the post-Easter season, the events in the life of Christ having been commemorated, the Church begins to teach the principles of its own foundation and ministry and the duties of pastors. In the Sundays after Easter we find set forth the teaching of Christ as the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep ; and in general, that of the true nature of Christian fellowship. The whole season of Pentecost, or Whitsuntide, coming in May or June, teaches us to have a " right judgment " in all things; to be led of the Holy Spirit, but to beware of false prophets. The teaching for the feast of St. Philip and St. James (May 1), is " I am the way, the truth and the light." The gospel for Tuesday in Whitsun week is " He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold . . . is a thief and a robber . . . I am the door. . . ." [21]

Hence it is appropriate not only that this May eclogue should open with the yearnings of the worldly Palinode to join the May games, but that Piers' reproofs should center on this theme of the true Way and the false, and his tale be of the false Fox who entered the door by guile and of the little Kid who lacked judgment even though warned by his careful mother (who,

[20] *Kalendar of Shepherds*, ed. Heseltine, p. 4.

[21] All these, and other, scriptural references may be easily located by reference to a Book of Common Prayer.

E. K. says, is Christ who has warned the simple sort of faithful Christians). Not all the texts to which Piers seems to allude are to be found in the portions of the 16th century Book of Common Prayer appointed for days in May, or for Whitsuntide; his reproof of hireling shepherds is based on Ezekiel 34 ("... I will require my sheep at their hand ..."), and on the teachings for St. Peter's day (June 29). His account of the error of the early Church in exchanging for worldly power its pure and spiritual inheritance of "Pan himselfe," and his scornful repudiation of Palinode's belief that compromise would be better than further strife between shepherds (Protestants and Catholics), culminate in his intolerant conclusion: [22]

> Shepheard, I list none accordaunce make
> With shepheard, that does the right way forsake ...

which is based on 2 Corinthians 6:

> Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? ... And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God. ...

For Piers, this fellowship with false and faithless Papists would be, apparently, the unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost of Pentecost. E. K. in argument and gloss likewise emphasizes the necessity, in the present national crisis, of choosing between false prophets and the true Way. Show fellowship to the Papist powers and they will swallow up England.

E. K.'s gloss on the tale of the Kid stating that

> ... the moral of the whole tale ... is to warne the protestant beware, howe he geueth credit to the vnfaythfull Catholique: whereof we haue dayly proofes sufficient, but one moste famous of all practised of late yeares in Fraunce by Charles the nynth.

alludes, of course, to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew and is of the same tenor as passages in Philip Sidney's letter to the Queen warning her of the dangers of alliance with this false king's brother, the Duke of Alençon, who has likewise been guilty of using fire and sword and massacre against Protestants. Sidney concludes that the only right policy for the Queen is not to attempt to heal the wounds of division within the realm

[22] See "Maye," lines 103-169.

by a would-be peaceful compromise, but to go forward with honor and justice and stand alone as the protector of God's Church.[23]

The fact that Elizabeth was most effectually preventing "Monsieur" from harming England by keeping him busy in the apparently serious marriage negotiations, did not appear at all clearly at the time. The boy king of Scotland who, in March, 1578, had emerged from the dour tutelage of Buchanan to assume full powers at the age of twelve, had just fallen an easy victim to a Papist "Fox"—his French cousin, Esmé Stuart, Duc D'Aubigny, who completely captivated him before the eyes of the indignant "English" or Protestant party in Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1579.[24] It is tempting to see young James as the "Kiddie" whose "wrethed hornes gan newly sprout," and who was so entranced with the novel joys of the peddler's pack that he let himself get "popt in." The Queen herself, or her policy of careful "Motherliness" so constantly maintained throughout the 1570's, is the woeful "Gate"; anyone familiar with the records can see how pertinent and how irrestibly amusing the whole application is. But it is one which would take too much space to work out here.

6.

"June." Here Colin visits his friend Hobbinol in his pleasant "paradise," which, apparently, he has "found" through temperance. While Colin's emblem now expresses not hope but despair, Rosalind through Menalcas having proved false, the general tone is calm and serene, the theme, in part, that of friendship. Colin, midway in life, no longer strives to win renown; his faithful friend counsels him to leave the unhappy

[23] *Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat, 3. 52.

[24] William Camden, in the *History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth* . . . Fourth edition, 1688, under 1578, pp. 228 ff., recounts how Randolph was sent to Scotland to visit the young king in order to knit his mind unto England by recounting Elizabeth's "motherly affection" toward him. "In these days, as some English feared an Alteration of Religion by means of the Duke of Anjou: so also did the Scots by means of another Frenchman . . . D'Aubigny, who came to visit the King his Cousin." The king made him chamberlain of Scotland, and created him Duke of Lennox, procuring him envy from "many who secretly muttered that he, being a man most devoted to the Guises and the Romish Religion, was sent into Scotland to subvert the true Religion."

" north parts " and his unprofitable love, and join him in the rich dales. June marks the midpoint in man's life, when like the sun " he may ascend no more." Hobbinol's account of the " friendly Faeries " who dance their " trimly trodden traces " while " Phoebe shineth bright " no doubt refers to the revels on St. John's Eve, or Midsummer Night.

7.

" Julye." In this, the second " moral " eclogue, Spenser combines the main teachings of three saints' days of the summer season, all of which set forth the duty of bishops, or " shepherds " of the people, to be not proud lords of the parishes but feeders of the sheep. This is primarily the teaching of the epistle for St. James' day (July 25) : " . . . to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give . . . Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them. . . . But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. . . . " The gospel for St. Bartholomew's (August 24) is the same; while the collect for St. Peter's (June 29) sums up the whole matter in praying that God who through Christ commanded Peter " earnestly to feed thy flock," will make all bishops and pastors " diligently to preach thy holy Word. . . . " All these were favorite themes with Protestant preachers, Anglican and Puritan alike, who never ceased pointing out the evils of the proud prelate whose ambition is the ruin of the Church. Spenser's rather playful following of Mantuan's debate on mountains and plains [25] is not entirely unlike the gathering of instances from Scripture and Church history by which the controversialists of the time proved points in regard to the nature and institution of the episcopacy or hierarchy. By Algrind's mishap he lets Thomalin warn us to love the low degree, Archbishop Grindal, then sequestered (primarily for opposing the Queen's foreign policy),[26]

[25] In his commentary on " Julye " Renwick analyzes Spenser's use of Mantuan's seventh and ninth eclogues.

[26] According to Strype, cited in the *DNB* article on Grindal, the real cause of Grindal's sequestration was his setting forth the true relations of the temporal and spiritual powers in a letter to the Queen in December, 1576. The Queen's change of attitude toward him resulted from her change in foreign policy toward the Catholic powers.

being thus praised as a right bishop "sequestred from all ambition."

8.

"August." In this "delectable controuersie," or singing match in the Theocritean manner, Willye and Perigot celebrate the month of harvest in a Lammas contest.[27] Perigot sings of how he met a lady in the meads, while Willye furnishes the undersongs so well that the admiring Cuddie must award prizes to both. There seems to be no particular point in their song:

Perigot: It fell vpon a holly eue,
Willye: hey ho hollidaye,
When holly fathers wont to shrieue:
now gynneth this roundelay.
Sitting vpon a hill so hye
hey ho the high hyll,
The while my flocke did feede thereby,
the while the shepheard selfe did spill:
I saw the bouncing Bellibone,
hey ho Bonibell,
Tripping ouer the dale alone . . .

which furnishes a "clownish" foil to the "courtly" sestina of Colin's upon the same theme—the departure of the envisioned mistress, and the lover's ensuing lament. But what lady is it who thus leaves the land lamenting, in the month of August?

It is usually Astrea. Spenser's *Mother Hubberds Tale* begins:

It was the month, in which the righteous Maide,
That for disdaine of sinfull worlds vpbraide,
Fled back to heauen, whence she was first conceiued,
Into her siluer bowre the Sunne receiued . . .

In the *Farie Queene* 5. 1. 11 we find:

. . . *Astrea* loathing lenger here to space
Mongst wicked men, in whom no truth she found,

returned to heaven where she is sixth of the twelve signs, her balances (Libra) hanging next to her. While an identification

[27] At Lammas, August 1, the unenclosed lands were re-distributed for the year. In Scotland, cowherds and shepherds built high hills of stones and sod, and staged contests, races, and so on, for prizes. In Ireland, the great and ancient fairs, marked by contests of harpers and pipers for prizes, were held in August. See the *Golden Bough*, Part 3 (*The Dying God*), pp. 100-102.

of either Perigot's " bonilasse " in her green kirtle, or of Colin's love, with Astrea (Virgo) is too far-fetched, nevertheless it is true that Virgo being the sign of August, and traditionally equated with both Ceres, Lady of the Harvest, and with Diana whose great feast was August 14, and, for Renaissance readers, with the Blessed Virgin Mary whose Assumption was August 15, we should not be surprised at any combination.

Let us turn to Turberville's translation of Mantuan.[28] In " The .vij. Eglogue entituled Pollux " a shepherd traces first the whole history of " the Shepierds trade," from Moses, Apollo, Paris, to Christ (Spenser's source, in part, for " Julye "), and then narrates how Pollux, an unhappy boy oppressed by froward father and proud stepdame, ran away from his flock, lamenting his love whom he prays the gods to preserve until his return. Under a " Popple tree " he saw a Virgin, crowned with a garland, her face and habit most nymphlike. She warned him of the dangers of the pleasant country, whose paths lead to destruction and a dungeon where he will be changed to a monster; let him flee to Mount Carmel . . . Back to the skies the Virgin flew; to the cloister went the lad. In the eighth eclogue, " Religio," comes the interpretation:

> She was no Driad Nimph perdie
> that in the woods doth roonne.
> Nor any of the Orcades
> that haunt the hills on hie:
> But Mother shee to Mightie God
> descended from the Skie. . . .

God has placed her above all; the signs of the zodiac adorn her head. She is the shepherd's goddess, the giver of fertility and good harvest; her solemn feasts go through the whole year, beginning and ending in August.

While Spenser makes no attempt to equate the subjects of Perigot's or Colin's songs with any of these manifestations of Virgo, it is nevertheless true that the whole complicated conception of the pastoral Lady of August is so inwoven with every pastoral tradition that it is difficult to avoid meeting her in

[28] *The Eglogs of the Poet B. Mantuan Carmelitan, Turned into English Verse and set forth with the argument to every Eglog*, 1567. In his preface, Turberville emphasizes his effort to use the " common country phrase," for shepherds' speech, not the " stile of an Heroicall personage. . . ."

some guise. Sidney gives a great and puzzling emphasis, in his *Arcadia*, to the departure from the country of the heavenly maid Urania, who is at once a rural shepherdess, a lady and a goddess. It is of interest that her shepherd lovers, Claius and Strephon, lament her absence in a sestina;[29] it should be compared with Colin's. Did Sidney and Spenser thus engage in a "contest" of sestinas? And was not the "holly eue" when "Holly fathers wont to shrieue" of Perigot's song the eve of the Assumption? At all events, in the pictures for the calendars, for August we always find a "bonilasse" who passes through the harvest fields, and it was natural that Perigot and Willye should sing of this apparition; in his cantos of *Mutabilitie*, Spenser saw her "cround With eares of corne, and full her hand was found."[30]

9.

"September." Here Spenser resumes the ecclesiastical satire with the third "moral" eclogue whose "satirical bitterness" like that of "Maye" and "Julye" touches on worldly pastors. Their sin is now not only pride but covetousness; this is the month which deals with money, with economic justice—the month of Libra the Balances.[31] It is the age when man looks forward to an old age of comfort or of penury, when if barns be empty there is no further chance to fill them. Traditionally, it is the month of the landlord, when tenants paid their rents and settled accounts at Michaelmas. The Church combines, on the feast of St. Michael and All Angels (September 29), the defeat and fall of Satan and his host with the teaching of Christ concerning the little child ("Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones," for "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father") to form the conception of guardian angels. Then the teaching for St. Matthew's (September 21) is that as Christ called Matthew from the receipt of custom, so must we forsake all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches to follow Christ; the "god of this world hath blinded the minds" of those who believe not. Hence September teaches of

[29] *Works*, ed. Feuillerat, 4. 309.

[30] *Faerie Queene* 7. 7. 37.

[31] *Ibid.* 7. 7. 38. Here Spenser's September is "enricht with bounty of the soil," and carries his balances of Justice.

just and unjust shepherds; the good shepherd is the guardian of the sheep, not the devourer of them, be he bishop or prince or lord.

It is in this month, when man should be prosperous in wisdom, that Diggon Davy, the ragged prodigal, returns empty from the foreign land where he had gone " thrise three Moones " before, in hope of gain. He had found " plenty," " but all of misery." That was the land of plenty only for those who " of guile maken gayne," who buy and sell their very souls, who cut each other's throats. In the cold western wind, Diggon and the sympathetic Hobbinol sit down to discuss the former's hard fortune, and the grievous state of the lost sheep of these covetous shepherds. Diggon's tale of how Roffy, the one good shepherd, killed the cruel wolf shows by contrast an example of justice, mercy, and wisdom in that land of violence and cruelty, the root of whose evil was the love of money.

It is not unlikely, I think, that this land was Ireland, whence Sir Henry Sidney had lately returned in bitterness, and where, there is no doubt, Diggon's account is applicable.[32] At present I can only note its suitability for this month.

10.

" October." This, the last of the " moral " eclogues, in which Cuddie, " the perfecte paterne of a Poet . . . finding no maintenaunce of his state and studies, complayneth of the contempte of Poetrie, and the causes thereof," is, as we know, somewhat like Mantuan's fifth, where

> Silvanus seemes to muse
> at poets ydle life:
> Himselfe not over hastie yet
> by gift to ease their griefe.

[32] For Sir Henry Sidney, a large part of establishing Elizabeth's government in Ireland meant establishing the English Church; this ever failed because the bishops and clergy were Papist, covetous, loose-living. Yet the Queen could reform the Church in Ireland, if she would. See, for instance, the *Calendar of Carew Manuscripts, 1578-1588*, pp. 334 ff. Spenser, later, in his *Veue of the Present State of Ireland*, expressed similar views: the Church in Ireland had whatever disorders it has in England, and many more. In 1579, as we know, Ireland was the point of attack for the Papal powers, being looked on as scarcely " reformed " at all. It was ever the land which ought to make settlers rich, but which sent them home ruined.

But Candid (poet poore)
bewailes the present time:
Wherein the Learned loathed are,
and such as maken Rime.

But Spenser lets his malcontent Cuddie argue not with an unappreciative potential patron but with his high-minded friend Piers, who urges him (in vain) to aspire to higher things—the glory without the gain. Spenser also, with the help of E. K., sets forth the idea of the divine, Bacchic, or Dionysian inspiration of the poet. When E. K. speaks of poetry as not so much an art as divine gift " . . . poured into the witte by a certain ἐνθουσιασμὸς and celestiall inspiration. . . ." and when, at the end of his gloss, he explains of Cuddie's emblem [Est deus in nobis] " Agitante calescimus illo," that

Hereby is meant, as also in the whole course of this Aeglogue, that Poetry is a diuine instinct and vnnatural rage passing the reache of comen reason,

he is at the same time showing us why this eclogue was placed in October. For October is the month of the vintage—hence of inspiration.

In the old *Kalendar of Shepherds,* October (on a page opposite a large woodcut of wine-making) speaks of hers as the time when Bacchus is " ready dight " to " press all manner wine ":

Of which is sacred, as we see daily,
The blessed body of Christ, in flesh and blood,
Which is our hope, refection and food . . .[33]

while in the primer, man sits drinking wine at a feast, enjoying the fruits of his travail. Thus we get two ideas of the October feast—communion with the god, and reward of labor. And these are the two that Cuddie finds necessary for the poet; let him but have the feast, and he will experience tremendous inspiration:

. . . Let powre in lauish cups and thriftie bitts of meate,
For *Bacchus* fruite is frend to *Phoebus* wise.
And when with Wine the braine begins to sweate,
The nombres flowe as fast as spring doth ryse.

[33] *Kalendar of Shepherds,* ed. Heseltine, p. 27.

> Thou kenst not *Percie* howe the ryme should rage.
> O if my temples were distained with wine,
> And girt in girlonds of wild Yvie twine,
> How I could reare the Muse on stately stage. . . .[34]

But, as it is, his courage cools ere it be warm; therefore, " content us in thys humble shade. . . . " Thus Spenser, as usual, treats his shepherd with gentle irony. While everyone who has commented on Spenser's Platonism, or his theory of poetry, cites the " October " eclogue, little seems to have been written on the whole question of poetic and religious inspiration as it must have appeared to Protestant scholars of the 16th century—to culminate later in Milton.

Perhaps the combination of ideas is expressed in the teachings for St. Luke's day (October 18) ; it is he who is patron of Fine Arts and physician, who heals the diseases of the soul. The epistle is " I have finished my course, I have kept the faith . . . there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," the gospel is " The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few . . . the labourer is worthy of his hire," while psalm 137, " By the waters of Babylon," . . . " sing us one of the songs of Sion," was appointed as introit in the early Prayer Books. Indeed, in this latter end of the Church year, are repeated the teachings that mark the season of Pentecost: the " calling " of Christians by the Holy Spirit, putting on the armor of God in order to wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers of darkness, and (for the twentieth Sunday after Trinity),

> . . . be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. . . .

Thus the month of the vintage stands for " enthusiasm," or " inspiration," by the Holy Spirit, exorcism or withstanding of demons, a last harvest feast, a winning of the victor's crown. Spenser's eclogue is mainly a Defence of Poesie; yet of all the months, October is the best wherein to place it.

[34] " October," lines 103-109.

11.

" Nouember." The great feasts of All Saints and of All Souls bring to an end the Church year, the cycle beginning with the Advent of Christ and ending with the Day of Judgment and the vision of Immortality, prefigured at Easter. While the Protestant calendar dropped All Souls, November remained the time in which, as the " Master Shepherd " said, mankind like the year has lost his kindly heat, and hath " no more hope of long life, but desireth to the life everlasting." Hence Spenser placed his pastoral elegy, fashioned like Marot's lament for the death of the French Queen, in this month whose teaching is of death and immortality.

This is a " plaintive " eclogue not only because it contains the dirge for the death of " Dido the greate shepehearde his daughter sheene," but also because that death so affects the fortunes of Colin and the other shepherds that their days, like those of the aging year, are sore deadened by the force of oncoming Winter:

> But nowe sadde *Winter* welked hath the day,
> And *Phoebus* weary of his yerely taske,
> Ystabled hath his steedes in lowly laye,
> And taken vp his ynne in *Fishes* haske. . . .
> The mornefull Muse in myrth now list ne maske,
> As shee was wont in youngth and sommer dayes. . . .[35]

How can one explain the " error " of putting the sun in the sign Pisces in November? It cannot possibly be a real error, for not only would Spenser, E. K., and all their readers certainly know the signs of the zodiac, but it is impossible for this eclogue to have been originally written for February[36]—the days would be getting longer then, not shorter. Besides, even unlearned readers would know that the sign changes during the month, as marked in the commonest almanacs; yet E. K. says, " . . . the sonne, reigneth that is, in the signe Pisces all Nouember. A haske is a wicker pad, wherein they vse to cary fish." My conjecture is that here is a riddle, or dark conceit, to be solved by guessing that all November is to be kept as a fast, or un-

[35] " November," lines 13-16.
[36] Renwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 184 and 226.

seasonable Lent; Phoebus' inn is at "the Sign of the Fish." At least, on some old calendars, fast days were called "fish days" and indicated by writing in the word "fish." It is all part of the universal mourning:

> Shepheards, that by your flocks on Kentish downes abyde,
> Waile ye this wofull waste of natures warke:
> Waile we the wight, whose presence was our pryde:
> Waile we the wight, whose absence is our carke.
> The sonne of all the world is dimme and darke. . . .[37]

But who is Dido? It has always been necessary either to suggest some personage so unsuitable or conjectural as to make Spenser's superlatives ridiculous, or to conclude that, her identity being hidden from E. K., we can certainly never guess it,[38] or to suspect that the poem was merely a literary exercise in imitation of Marot's elegy on the death of "Loys the frenche Queene," and the lady non-existent. What if she were Elisa, the English Queen—alluded to as Dido, Virgil's Elisa, or Elissa—she who had of late been "dead" indeed to the Earl of Leicester, to the Sidneys, to all who saw her true self lost and gone by reason of her policy of marrying the heir to the throne of France? Spenser uses this sort of "death" often enough. In "October" Piers says of Cuddie's songs, "now they in thee, and thou in sleepe art dead." In the *Teares of the Muses*: "Our pleasant Willy, ah is dead of late. . . ." In *Colin Clouts Come Home Again* Hobbinol says that in Colin's absence, "all dead in dole did lie,"

> But now both woods and fields, and floods reviue,
> Sith thou art come, their cause of meriment,
> That vs late dead, hast made again aliue.

This elegy is an elaborate amplification of the same idea. Dido dies in November not only because the season of All Saints has the dual nature of the pastoral elegy itself—grief and joy—but because it is the Queen's own month, November 17, the day of her accession, being celebrated, as some objected, as if she were indeed a saint in the calendar.

The main theme of the preaching and of the pageantry in her

[37] "November," lines 63-67.

[38] Renwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-222, reviews the old suggestions that Dido was Ambrosia Sidney, who died in 1575, or an "unknown and unrecorded illegitimate daughter of Leicester by Lady Sheffield."

honor was her Protestant leadership, her triumph over the Pope. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada this was perhaps more marked, as in *A Sermon Preached at Poules Crosse the 17. of November An. 1589 In Joyfull remembrance of her maiesties most gratious Raigne over us, now 32:*

> We are not yet in the *December* of our Dayes, but in *November*, neither in the end of that month, but in the midst, and Her Highness day; this yeere is the first, after the *Lordes* day, and if it be *Ominous*? Behold the sign is in *Leo*, next unto *Virgo*: and look your *Calendar*, who standeth in the last day of the last moneth of *December* and in the signe *Pisces* under foote, and you shall finde it to be *Pope Silvester* . . . who . . . got his *Dignitie* by the *Divel*. . . .

But November 17 had been celebrated gloriously in Elizabeth's honor ever since 1570, when the rebellion in the north had been crushed, and the Pope's bull of excommunication issued against her. The month was Elizabeth's.

Reread in this light, all the allusions become dangerously and amusingly clear. Dido is " some mayden of greate bloud, whom he calleth Dido. The personage is secrete, and to me altogether unknowne, albe of him selfe I often required the same." When E. K. goes on to gloss Colin's " Dido the greate shephearde his daughter sheene," by saying

> The great shepheard) is some man of high degree, and not as some vainely suppose God Pan. The person both of the shephearde and of Dido is vnknowen and closely buried in the Authors conceipt. But out of doubt I am, that it is not Rosalind, as some imagine: for he speaketh soone after of her also.

we think at once of " Aprill," the companion-piece to " Nouember " in structure and versification, in which the " goddess " *is* daughter of " God Pan," " her highnesse Father, late of worthy memorye K. Henry the eyght." Why should anyone " vainely " suppose Dido to be the daughter of Pan—or why, at least, should E. K. mention the point—unless there were some connection with a " dangerous " idea? The shepherds of Kent wail Dido's loss because by it their own lives are laid waste—Sidney's point of view in his letter against the French marriage. Dido is the " mayne braunch " whose death destroys all " buddes." Her entertainment of the shepherds with " curds and clouted Creame " refers to the Queen's bounty and favor.

The allusion to "Lobbin" long accepted, though with puzzlement, as meaning the Earl of Leicester, becomes clear:

> O thou great shepheard *Lobbin*, how great is thy griefe,
> Where bene the nosegayes that she dight for thee:
> The coloured chaplets wrought with a chiefe,
> The knotted rushrings, and gilte Rosemaree?
> For shee deemed nothing too deere for thee.
> Ah they bene all yclad in clay
> One bitter blast blewe all away.
> O heauie herse,
> Thereof nought remaynes but the memoree.
> O carefull verse.[39]

It was in 1579 that Leicester's "grief" was greatest—that is, when it seemed that the alliance with the Catholic powers might actually take place, and when the whole Dudley party was most "of the opposition." The sad change in affairs is cast into pastoral terms. Still, times will no doubt mend, as they will for Archbishop Grindal. . . . "Why then weepes *Lobbin* so without remorse?"

What better month, then, in which to place the elegy which mourns the death, yet joys in the immortality, of Dido? She, like those Christians who after great tribulation enter into the unspeakable joys of the saints in white raiment about the throne of the Lamb,

> . . . raignes a goddesse now emong the saintes,
> That whilome was the saynt of shepheards light:
> And is enstalled nowe in heauens hight.
> I see thee blessed soule, I see,
> Walke in *Elisian* fieldes so free.
> O happy herse. . . .[40]

12.

"December." Here in his last "plaintive" eclogue, Colin reviews his unhappy life. Spenser follows Marot, yet works out the plan of the four seasons more closely, emphasizing Colin's failure to reap the harvest of good seed planted in youth:

[39] "November," lines 113-122. Dr. Edwin Greenlaw, in "Spenser and the Earl of Leicester," *PMLA* 25 (1910). 535-561, suggested that Spenser's "warning" in *Mother Hubberds Tale* of the dangers of the French alliance, being "over-zealous," resulted in his loss of the Earl's favor, as hinted at in *Virgils Gnat*. The case would seem to be the same in regard to the *Calender*.

[40] "November," lines 175-180.

So now my yeare drawes to his latter terme,
My spring is spent, my sommer burnt vp quite:
My haruest hasts to stirre vp winter sterne,
And bids him clayme with rigorous rage hys right. . . .

While Colin Clout, whose name is taken not only from Marot but also from the " ragged " native satirist of abuses in Church and State, John Skelton, may in some sense be the mouthpiece of Spenser, our fruitless overemphasis upon the biographical elements has led us to neglect his primary purpose in this calendar of man's life: he furnishes the framework of the four seasons, within which may be fitted also the teachings of many of the twelve months. If he is unhappy, that is a way of saying that the times are out of joint. Like Philip Sidney,[41] he changes his emblem from " Anchora speme " to " Gia speme spenta," but finally, in " December," to one that is omitted but which E. K. says signified that " all things perish and come to theyr last end, but workes of learned wits and monuments of Poetry abide for euer." This is the conclusion that no doubt both Sidney and Spenser were particularly aware of in the year 1579, when the *Shepheardes Calender* was published; it is the true commonplace with which to close a calendar, which is at once ephemeral and everlasting. As " Immerito " says in his epilogue:

. . . if I marked well the starres reuolution,
It shall continewe till the worlds dissolution.
To teache the ruder shepheard how to feede his sheepe,
And from the falsers fraud his folded flocke to keepe.

Hollins College

[41] Philip Sidney changed his emblem, during 1579, from " I hope," to " I have done with hoping." According to Camden, this was upon the birth of Leicester's son.

VITA

Mary Parmenter was born in Green Cove Springs, Florida, December 7, 1895. She attended the public school in Orange Park, Florida, and Fairmount School, a preparatory school for girls in Monteagle, Tennessee. In 1915 she taught in the public school in Orange Park, and in 1916 at Fairmount. In 1917 she entered Goucher College, Baltimore, Maryland; she there received the A. B. degree in 1921, majoring in Psychology and Philosophy. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. During 1921-26 she taught English and mathematics in the Girls High School, Atlanta, Georgia. During 1926-30 she did part or full time graduate work at the Johns Hopkins Hopkins University, at the same time serving as instructor in the English department at Goucher College. In 1930 she received the M. A. degree at the Johns Hopkins and became an instructor at Hollins College, Virginia. In 1932-33 she completed the requirements for the Ph. D. degree at the Johns Hopkins.